MODERN WOMAN: Her Intentions

by

Florence Farr

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MODERN WOMAN

HER INTENTIONS

BY

FLORENCE FARR

LONDON
FRANK PALMER
12–14 RED LION COURT

Another fire has come into the harp,
Fire from beyond the world, and wakens it:
It has begun to cry out to the eagles!

W. B. YEATS,
Second version of "Shadowy Waters."

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PREFACE

THERE is a great difficulty in writing of the women of the first ten years of the twentieth century. This is to be the Woman's Century. In it she is to awake from her long sleep and come into her kingdom; but when I look about me I find myself surrounded by the most terribly contradictory facts. We know there is to be a revaluation of all values—we know that old rubbish is to be burnt up, that the social world is to be melted down and remoulded "nearer to the heart's desire"; but at the same time we have to recognize that in spite of the enthusiasm of the alchemists and the transmuters of base metal into gold, the main body of society is as yet hardly aware of the fire that is to burn it.

In writing of this change I have to explain to one set of women, who will think me outrageously advanced, my opinions of another

set of women, who will think me absurdly conventional.

I think I had better own up at once that as an artist I am prejudiced against the exhibition of the necessities of nature. I am like Mr. Galsworthy's little toy terrier, who disliked the strong odours of real life. Yet at the same time I have a passion for the discussion of life ; the salt of wit makes me enjoy the strongest flavours. So I present myself and my limitations to my readers, hoping that my fervid faith in the delight of the communion of thoughts, emotions, and sympathies will make up for my lack of conviction in some other directions.

Before we proceed any further I think I ought to point out that the degradation of women in the past originated in the region of the country round Mount Ararat. The lowering of their status occurred when the white races adopted the Assyrian Semite's Scriptures. The Christian religion brought us that curse cowering behind its gospel of glad tidings ; and it is most remarkable to trace the way in which the Jews' religion crept into

Europe under the cloak of Christianity. In heaven, the Gospel says, there is love, but neither marriage or giving in marriage. Are we to wait for heaven or the millennium before the present system of marrying and selling in marriage shall be abolished? Everyone who has read a modern encyclopædia is familiar with the fact that the first chapters of Genesis are made up of two different narratives. One, called the Priestly narrative, from the beginning to the first part of the fourth verse of the second chapter of Genesis, and continued in the first five verses of the fifth chapter. There is nothing derogatory to women in this narrative. The unpleasant details about Adam and Eve are in the Prophetic narrative, which is given from the second part of the fourth verse of the second chapter to the twenty-sixth verse of the fourth chapter. The Jews have taken advantage of the confusion of these two contradictory stories to fix the blame of all social evils on Eve, just as the Hesiod, influenced by Eastern legend, fixed it on Pandora. These myths come from the same region, a region in which women were kept

entirely for the amusement and service of men, and were humbled by every kind of insult that the Semite mind could invent. Women have a very long score to settle with the Jews and the Mahommedans. Even Hindoo women were comparatively respected and free until the Mahommedans brought their ideas into Hindostan. And I am told that in nearly every city of ill-fame in the world the profits arising from the procuring of girls are collected by the Chosen Nation. The Semites founded their opinion of women on fabulous legends and false science. They assert that man gives the spirit and woman the matter to the child. Embryology has now taught us that the parents make exactly equal contributions of chromatin, or the active element, to the original cell from which a child develops. It has taught us that, originally, cells are capable of self-reproduction; that sex is not always a vital necessity, but often a device for securing variety. It has taught us by experiment that boys come from their mother's right side, and girls from her left side, and in a healthy mother the rhythm of sex

is regular. The symbolism of the Fall might indeed apply to the history of the cell which at first contains its own force of reproduction, but in the case of a female ovum deliberately parts with some of its original power in order that it may be replaced by the vital power of a male. The male cell also rends itself apart, and becomes quite unfit for reproductive purposes until it can find another cell with which to join. In the simple facts which have been observed through microscopes there is no place for the overweening pride of the Semite race in the virtue of maleness; and I can only hope that it was ignorance and not malice that led the Jews and the Arabs to spread false doctrine on the subject of sex. It is unfortunate that the first patriarchs, from whom they proudly count their descent, had much in common with the primitive goat worshippers, who were responsible for the one-sided arrangements for sexual contentment common in harems and the other patriarchal institutions I have mentioned.

In the great mediæval revival, the real age of chivalry and troubadours, the knights

carried their ladies' colours to victory in vain. The old lies are in our blood—we still believe in Eve and her shame. White men have fought in the past, and it remains for white women to fight now, and at last rid their sex all over the world of the ignominy of this false doctrine.

I

THE VOTE

Modern Woman: Her Intentions

I

THE VOTE

It is my conviction that all great changes come from a force that after many years of silence blazes with emotional, passionate enthusiasm. That long period of torpid latent life, once it is liberated from prison, gives driving power. Without silence and darkness no new creature can be brought forth. Without resistance no great desire can be felt. It is the same with the woman's movement.

When the vote was refused, the first artillery for the woman's army was forged. That little request for the vote might have been granted three years ago without making any more difference than the borough council vote here, or the parliamentary vote in New Zealand, Australia, Norway, Finland, and so forth, has made already. That little request, that might have passed almost unnoticed had it

been granted, has raised up a powerful body of feeling on both sides, that will end in one of the greatest social revolutions of the time.

Whether women are militant or anti-militant, whether they ask for the vote in order to fight the working man or to join hands with him, whether they content themselves with words of approval and donations, or whether they lose their tempers in denunciation of the unfeminine behaviour of certain brave enthusiasts —yet all the women of many opinions are alike rousing themselves from their former deadly attitude of quiescent acceptance.

The most violent anti-suffragette is obliged to try to understand the questions of social reform in order to protest against them. The most downtrodden wife is hearing rumours that even now there are laws which might protect her from domestic tyranny. The county ladies who never read anything but *The Queen*, *The Spectator*, or *Punch*, protest against the struggle, but admit that it is time that women of property had a vote now that their butlers and coachmen have obtained that privilege. The "too old at thirty" brigade is carrying the campaign into the ball-room and skating-rink. All this is familiar to everyone that moves in English society to-day, and one word of terror used by men who oppose the vote is heard on all sides. They

say the vote is "the thin end of the wedge," and I reply gladly from my side—not only as a suffragist, but as an onlooker at the loves and hatreds of the sexes—I reply that the wedge is being driven every day. Every day of delay in giving women the vote gives them a power far more deadly, a hope more dangerous, an accomplishment far more vital. It gives them the power of standing up for themselves, freed from the belief in the protection of men. It gives them hope in each other. It teaches them to speak for themselves, and discover the force of their eloquence and the ingenuity of their resources. It is impossible to go to a meeting of the militant party without feeling amazement at the dexterity of all concerned. With wit, with banter, with beauty, with dignity, awkward questions are answered, coarse jokes are frustrated, and swift as light the laugh is turned against the interrupter.

The odd contrast between the scenes we personally witness and the same scenes served up for breakfast by the daily press, is having some effect in breaking up the touching faith of our foremothers in the accuracy of newspaper reports. Women are awake to public affairs for the first time since the matriarchal period. They are weighing the evidence of the press, they are considering political facts. They are said to be losing the chivalrous

adoration of men. But in contrast to the politeness of men to well-dressed, good-looking women, I would call attention to the attitude of a respectable hospital official towards a poor woman who, in November, 1909, brought her little boy as an out-patient.

She arrived very early in order to be able to go to her work with as little delay as possible, and secured a seat before the men, who came in later. When the attendant entered, she was made to go back to the last seat of all and wait for her son to take his turn until all the elder males had been interviewed. "Men come first, your place is at the back," was all the answer she got to her protests. So much for chivalry when a woman is poor and worn with labour. It is pathetic to see the working woman, apologetic for her poverty, apologetic for her womanhood, apologetic for her ill-health or any temporary need of help. And I say that the working woman's heroic patience has been attained by centuries of ill-usage and *lack* of chivalry. Most women would not understand the idea of chivalry if it were explained to them, so little does it come within their range of experience. We have no conception of the size of the mass we are dealing with. In England and Wales there are about 17 million females. Of these females, 13 million are past childhood, roughly speaking 6 million of these are unmarried,

7 million are married or widows. About 9 million married and unmarried women are unoccupied, or have retired from business; about 4 million are engaged in occupations, and trying to make their own living. Of the 16 million males, about 2 million are unoccupied or retired, 10 million are occupied, and the rest are children. Now we find from the last census that about 7 million women are in charge of a family, and 3 million of these are occupied in business; 6 million women are unmarried, about 1 million of these are occupied in business, and nearly ½ million have independent means. Making allowance for the very young, we have about 2½ million grown women in a dependent position without a husband or an occupation in England and Wales alone.

If one spends an afternoon studying the census returns, one sees in all occupations the well-paid businesses are for men, and the ill-paid for women. In general and local government, defence of the country, and professional occupations, 326 thousand women only have subordinate posts, but there are nearly 2 million in domestic service. Textile manufactures, 663 thousand; dress, 710 thousand; food and lodging, 300 thousand, but in commerce and finance only 60 thousand.

Men can no longer support their daughters, and daughters cannot command good positions

in lucrative professions. There are only 7 million families, and at least 4 million grown-up women, unmarried and superfluous as mothers. The working man tells these women to "go home and do the washing." "Well," a virgin replies, "one million of us are working at laundry and other work, under half a million of us are amusing ourselves on independent incomes, and the rest of us have to while away life somehow without money or occupation, so we are making a revolution."

The struggle for the vote is putting heart into the superfluous woman, and it is putting the hope of reorganizing the market value of women's labour into her heart. We not only want work, but we want good wages. If we have children we want to be sure they will be cared for and fed. If we keep house we want our wages. The 12 million females that have no independent income cry out to the ½ million that has an independent income, in their almost hopeless struggle to win fair wages. It is interesting to think that out of the total population of about 32½ million in England and Wales, a very little over ½ million are living on independent incomes, and we find that there are less than 100,000 heirs, and more than 400,000 heiresses in this country. The rest, that is 32 million, have to work or starve so as to save enough for their old age. Each person that lives at ease is surrounded

by sixty-five people that have to struggle. Each woman that has a husband knows that a widow or spinster stands portionless beside her. Figures are abstractions, but behind these figures are facts and problems that are driving us before them with such resistless cruelty that at last we are determined to cry halt and make a fight—vote or no vote !

II

WOMEN'S INCOMES

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WOMEN'S INCOMES

LET us say that certain *prime donne* can earn £25,000 a year for a few years, that the most successful London actress may receive a salary of £5000 a year, that a successful novelist may get a few thousands a year by her books, that a lady doctor or dressmaker may make £1000 a year, and you have admitted all that can be said in favour of the present means women have of making a large income on the same lines as men. I suppose the average successful singer is delighted with £1000 a year, the average successful actress with £10 a week or £500 a year, the average novelist with £300 a year, and the average lady doctor with the same. In an institution which gives £1000 a year to its male principal, we find the lady superintendent receiving £200 a year, and the male secretary £350. Women find it hard to get any professional income out of the Government offices, the Church, or the law courts. In the Post Office and in all educational work the disparities between the salaries of men and women is well known. And I think

we may take it for granted that the average business income of an everyday sort of woman, working hard, is less than £100 a year. The income of a charwoman in London, we know, is 2s. 6d. a day, or a possible 15s. a week—that is, 3d. an hour, exactly half a man's minimum wage.

These are a few well-known facts. The reason is that women are said to have " other means " of earning a livelihood. First among these comes the comfortable possibility of inheriting money from relations. Many great heiresses and little heiresses are to be found among the conservative forces of the land, for these women have nothing to gain and everything to lose by changing the present state of things. They and the insurance offices alike prosper on the present foundations of English family life.

Next comes the probably miserable alternative of marrying a rich husband. It is a very curious thing that it is harder for a rich man to be naturally attractive to women than it is for the camel to pass through the needle's eye, and the consequence is that women generally have a more or less unhappy domestic life when they definitely marry for a livelihood.

Then we have the adventuress, who succeeds in making a handsome income by the unscrupulous use of her intelligence and charm. After that come the various types of women

who hire themselves or are hired out for the relief of excitable gentlemen. And lastly the crowd of desolate diseased refuse who pick up a living any way they can, in ways too horrible to think of, by the practice of vulgar indecency.

All these incomes which are earned by women, either by their tenderness and charm or by their bestiality, are, together with the family inheritances, the real reasons why women as a sex are not made economically independent on the same lines as men. The father of a family longs to save his daughters from the temptations of poverty, and if they do what he bids them he insures his life in their favour. The husband prefers to keep his wife dancing to the tune he pays for, so he makes her allowance dependent on his own mood of the moment. The infatuated boy considers he is seeing life when he spends his money recklessly on an adventuress. All these women can undersell other women in the labour market, because they have incomes which make them independent of what they may earn there. They are, in a kind of way, what the strike organizers would call "blacklegs": they make life more difficult for the women who must work to live or starve.

Again, the magic of love is destroyed by the thought of money. And love is very apt to evaporate when such thoughts flame up in the mind.

The hope I see for the ennobling of sex relations is that women should, by some means never yet thought of, become independent of the caprice of individual man.

The average middle-class Englishman, I believe, looks upon his married life as a kind of business partnership, in which he pays money in order that he may not be worried about the care of his clothes or his food or his affectional needs. These things once settled and put under the care of a sensible woman, he can devote his thoughts to business, to betting, to cards, to golf, or any other amusement he may select to ensure that he may not become a "dull man." The average working man, of course, not only marries a housekeeper, a cook, a maid-of-all-work, but the mother and nurse of his continuous flow of offspring, and the butt of his temper when the world has used him ill.

If any hope of eventual economic freedom is to come for the whole sex, I stand aghast to think of all the antagonistic interests that will have to be reconciled. It will be worse than the Budget. The wives will have to stand out for fixed allowances. The mothers will have to make their bargain either with their husbands or the State, whichever wants their children most. The housekeepers will have to take their wages like the other servants.

The women of the adventuress class are a

hopeless problem. They are worth a hundred a week at one moment, and nothing at all a few weeks later perhaps. Their trade is so dangerous. But we can cheer ourselves up with the statistics which tell us they are in England and Wales numbered by thousands only, whereas we are dealing at present with the problem of seventeen millions of women.

We have, then, four classes of women—the heiresses, the portionless wives, the courtesans, and the prostitutes—who stand in the way of the economic independence of women because they appear to be better off under the present state of disorganization. The labour market for women is of course permeated by their influence. The rich women who work for nothing, the wives who "get round" their husbands, the courtesans who command the "flesh market," the prostitutes, who are ignored by the rest of their sex, but revenge themselves on the ignorant by spreading disease and sorrow among the happy and healthy.

The record of the overwhelming advantages of the economic independence of women can hardly be compressed into the compass of this chapter. It would make love marriages possible. It is almost certain that a love marriage on the woman's side is one of the most important elements for good in the production of a fine race. If a girl were free to

choose according to her inclination, there is practically no doubt that she would choose the right father for her child, however badly she might choose a lifelong companion for herself.

This is, of course, true about both the sexes to a certain extent, although average men are much less dainty about these matters than the average woman. If we could remove the economic considerations from parenthood it would help towards the invigoration of the race.

The sad part of this question is that according to all the great racial ideals women ought to be economically independent, but, according to all little social ideals, it seems inevitable that her independence will be resisted to the last.

III

THE VARIATIONS OF LOVE

III

THE VARIATIONS OF LOVE

We cannot trust ourselves to make a real love-knot unless money or custom forces us to "bear and forbear." There is always the lurking fear that we shall not be able to keep faith unless we swear upon the Book. This is, of course, not true of young lovers. Every first love is born free of tradition; indeed, not only is first love innocent and valiant, but it sweeps aside all the wise laws it has been taught, and burns away experience in its own light. The revelation is so extraordinary, so unlike anything told by the poets, so absorbing, that it is impossible to believe that the feeling can die out. Sometimes one feels a great pity for the lovers in England, because young English girls are very apt to mistake a feeling of gratified vanity and the emotion of a new sensation for love of some special man who happens to make love to them at the propitious moment. Many faithful women go through life enduring the love of a man whom they care for very moderately, who, on his side, congratulates himself on having

found a virtuous wife. It is lucky for these people that probably the wife, in her limited circle of acquaintances, will never meet the man who ought to have been her mate.

I have often talked to the apparently contented mother of a family, when some little word reveals to me that it is possible to be the mother of a man's children merely by putting up with his caresses while one thinks about some other subject. Is it any wonder that the race becomes more and more anæmic and bored with existence as generation follows generation ?

Other wives have loved their husbands with passion, and perhaps for two years their devotion has steadily increased, but the husband meanwhile has known many ecstasies and wearinesses. His love is like the waves, which follow each other as periods of dullness follow moments of rapture. Hers has been like the tide, increasing in devotion and tenderness ; but the tide turns at last, and the dancing of the waves can do very little to stay its ebbing. I think men are justified who say that women either love too much for their taste or not at all.

Some women say they could love their husbands better if they did not see so much of the unromantic side of their lives. The holes in a man's socks are not the most endearing remembrances in the world.

The Variations of Love

The only permanent relations are founded on mutual contempt. Brothers and sisters have no illusions about each other, and if they feel any affection at all it is a steadfast one. Alas ! the close knowledge of weaknesses very seldom permits the affection to show through the contempt. Married lovers have to pass from the state of love, which is so apt to be a state of delusion, to the state of clear-sighted affection. The ordeal is one which very few survive.

Another tragedy of love is jealousy. A man or woman is very often jealous of the partner's brothers and sisters, or other relations. Those who love wish to be all in all to each other, those who quarrel dislike to have others taking sides in their quarrels. This fundamental jealousy of relations is ever apt to break into a flame, besides jealousy of the more usual kind.

Mr. Harold Gorst has written a book on *The Philosophy of Love*, in which he points out that it is unwise of a bridegroom to take instant possession of his bride. He maintains that the usual programme, in which a wife shows all her modesty and a husband all his love on the wedding-night, is an absurd waste of the honeymoon, which ought to be spent in a gradual approach to the supreme surrender. Again, wives are too apt to give up the charming resistances which are necessary to the satisfaction of a man's emotional nature.

Mr. Gorst cannot imagine that a husband would tire of his wife if she kept her right over her own body with a firm hand, and required wooing every time she yielded to the wedding of her husband. So much for the man of the world's point of view.

The marriage tie is a way of keeping people together while they undergo the various disillusions and jealousies that are inevitable, unless one of them is prepared to give way in everything. Is there any better way? In most cases, no.

The marriage tie will always exist, because it is the natural impulse of the majority of young people to wish to love each other alone, and to remain with each other for ever. The honeymoon having elapsed, they very likely find they are about to become parents, and they spend the intervening months in making happy preparations. Then the baby is born, and has to be brought up until it is old enough to go to school. If there are three children, they have to be looked after for about fourteen years. The wife is now thirty-four, and the husband thirty-eight. The children are placed in various schools away from home. Is there any alternative to the rather boring life that has to be lived out until death parts the parents? None. They are not rich enough to travel and amuse themselves, so the wife goes on housekeeping and calling on neigh-

bours, and changing her servants, and the husband goes to the City, plays golf, and reads trashy novels. The marriage tie must always persist while these people exist.

But what are the six million bachelors and the seven million spinsters to do? Some of them are very young; thousands of them do not wish to marry, their sexual nature is hardly developed more than a child's; others are invalids, openly or secretly; and a good number are leading illegally arranged lives because the present marriage laws do not suit their constitutions. Among the grown-up population about half the number are married, and the other half unmarried. Many of these marriages are unhappy, and it is to be presumed that at least six million of each sex do not wish to marry enough to overcome the terrors of saying what they want for ever, and getting it.

Now, having regard to the natural variations of love, I must suggest that the stigma might be removed from those who are not capable of lifelong fidelity. There seems good proof that a few millions of men and women are bringing misery upon the rest because they are treated as unworthy of social consideration. Medical men are saying that the disease which is undermining the health of the nation is dangerous only because it is shameful. It could be easily cured in its early stages if it

could be treated openly and without ruining the reputation of those whom it attacks. Even when health is retained, reputations are lost and careers are ruined in order to prop up the tottering institution of marriage by making it the only refuge for the respectable.

But until it is acknowledged that it is not respectable to live together when the temperaments are incompatible, there will be no real virtue in the married state. Never to want the same thing at the same time is a more far-reaching cause of emotional degradation than one violent outbreak of temper under extreme provocation. It is more degrading to the finer feelings than a temporary alienation of marital love. One would imagine that the men who refuse to alter the divorce laws really do believe in the sacrament of the marriage ceremony, instead of in the sacrament of the true love, which abides when there is a real compatibility of temperament.

IV

THE SORDID DIVORCE

IV

THE SORDID DIVORCE

I MENTIONED in passing that marriage was an institution that should not be ended, but should be mended. In the first place, let us inquire whether the marriage ceremony is a sacrament, whether parenthood is a sacrament, and why marriage should be binding. The Catholic Church refuses divorce altogether on the ground that the blessing of the Church makes the contract binding till death. Parents with children are generally prepared to endure each other for the sake of their family. While women are economically dependent it would be pure folly for them to advocate marriage for a short term. Very few women succeed in retaining their attraction for men for any considerable length of time. Ten years of attractiveness is not to be thought of in the majority of cases. While a man holds the purse-strings he can always find someone to marry. A woman can offer nothing but her power of enchantment, and most of them have to rely on the universal enchantment of innocence which can only be offered once.

But conditions are very variable even now.

Women hold the purse-strings when they are heiresses. They are as free as men when they are childless. Ninon de l'Enclos was irresistible until she was eighty, apparently because she was amusing as well as fascinating. Under such circumstances as these it is sometimes wise to seek divorce. In England this cannot be done without outraging every feeling of dignity and delicacy.

Unless one of the married pair is faithless, impotent, cruel, or rich enough to leave the neighbourhood, the other cannot get a divorce. This involves discussing the secrets of the alcove with solicitors, and a final exposure of your domestic concerns in the law courts, for the press and the public to take or leave as they are more or less painful to you and amusing to them.

A very frequent method of obtaining a divorce now is for a wife, who would not touch her husband with a besom if she could help it, to sue publicly for restitution of conjugal rights. To a woman of any delicacy such a demand would be degrading, even if it were made in private. To be obliged to make it publicly as a matter of form is, to say the least, unpleasant to such a woman. The next proceeding is taken when a certain time has elapsed and the husband has not noticed the wife who has to pretend to be pining for his forced caresses.

The Sordid Divorce

I confess it is hard to realize the state of a woman who actually can desire the society of a man who is weary of her. I have not imagination for that, I am afraid. The law was made by men, and men are said to know women better than they know each other; also, we have all heard of the charms of a captured or unwilling bride, so perhaps it is an instance in which men have done for women what they would wish to have done for themselves.

Whatever the reason is, the law is there, and when the husband has been faithless and refused his wife's embraces, he has done sufficient to justify the court in calling him guilty of desertion and adultery, and a decree *nisi* is pronounced. Then, if no evidence of collusion is forthcoming, and the court can make believe that one of the parties at least does *not* want to be divorced, the decree is made absolute in six months. Can anyone realize that the present divorce law is in such a hopelessly stupid state? There seems no possibility of using common sense in a law court. To get a divorce you must *not* agree together that it is a desirable step. To get a divorce the innocent person must speak in public of subjects no innocent person would care to mention in private. To get a divorce from a woman you respect at all, you must refuse to live with her, and must openly commit adultery,

at the same time making no arrangement with her as to how she is to get rid of you. The old complaint of the inequality of the divorce laws for the sexes is perhaps of importance, but to me it seems a small thing in comparison to the general sordidness of the whole proceeding.

Surely the one cause of causes for a divorce is that both the parties want it. Some simple form of procedure, such as separation on the first application, to be followed by divorce in six months if the parties had not made up their differences in the meantime, should be devised.

The difficulties would arise in cases in which the parties were not agreed, and I am afraid in those instances the question of money would nearly always be discovered to be the root of the trouble. Ladies would be found to be unaccountably attached to their husband's cheque-books; and gentlemen unable to separate themselves from a share in their wives' dividends. But when the question of fortune or wealth enters into the marriage bargain, why not let it be fought out on that ground?

Divorce is always brought about because of the weariness and boredom one human being causes another. Cruelty, adultery, temporary desertion, every kind of outrage can be borne if excitement and interest

counterbalance suffering. But the devotion of the whipped dog would soon be exhausted if the dog could find something in the world which interested him more than his master. Curiosity once fully satisfied, tenderness balances on the edge of the precipice of boredom, and may topple over at any moment.

Of course the insult of being considered a bore would be harder to bear in most instances than the accusation of wickedness, so on the whole it would seem advisable to keep to the good old formula of "incompatibility of temper," and fight out the money questions on their own merits.

Now the merits of the money question in marriage have never been properly arranged. In France the wife has her own *dot*, as a matter of course; but the French have so carefully adjusted their population to their pockets that we can only bow in silent admiration of their unparalleled foresight.

In England a girl very often marries without any fortune of her own, on the understanding either that she is beautiful and that the husband is prepared to endow her with all his worldly goods, or that she is so useful that she will really save him a good deal of money. If she is very beautiful, her relations can generally get a settlement made on her; if she is only useful, she is lucky if she can induce her husband to insure his life in her favour. The

merely useful wife has very little hold on ready money. One week she may get a good sum of money, another week nothing, for her household expenses. If she is clever and managing, she will probably gain her husband's confidence, and if he is honest and has a regular income they may be very comfortable together; but under other conditions the affairs of the household go from bad to worse, and the wife is only a very inefficient servant, who may get her keep, but who will certainly not get her wages.

I can only suggest that the position of wife and mother ought to legally entitle a woman to a fixed proportion of her husband's income, and the position of housekeeper to a further proportion. If, as is often the case in upper and middle-class modern marriage, the husband and wife do not live in the connubial state, the legal allowance as wife and mother would not be made, but the allowance as hostess and housekeeper could be enforced as long as they remained under the same roof. In the case of the poorer classes, where the wife does the whole work of keeping up the home and increasing the family, the proportion should be very much greater, so great, indeed, as to make both partners think twice before recklessly bringing children into the world. Among this class I think that the birth of a child might legalise the union of the parents.

This appears to be an old custom in many parts of the world.

The working man is the greatest enemy of women's equal value, I am afraid. Among the mining population, where his wages are high enough to make him independent, the woman he has married holds a very low position—very much what middle-class women held early in the nineteenth century. The working man of prudence and forethought is of course limiting his family with as much care as the rest of the world. But the others, who drive away drab intelligence by a Saturday orgy, forget prudence, and the result is that their wives are always in the pangs of chirdbirth or miscarriage. The usual self-sacrifice of women comes dangerously near suicide in this matter. To save her husband from a few moments of self-control she goes through months of drugging, loses her beauty, undermines her health in the endeavour to exercise prudence and to avoid bringing children into the world for whom she has no hope of making provision.

A romance of the mining world, in September, 1909, is instructive reading. One Friday night, at 10 o'clock, the husband came home with two former lodgers, two old friends, and one stranger. They brought plenty of beer with them. The wife was upstairs in bed, but she called over the banisters to them to

make themselves at home, and returned to her sleep. Later on, when the men were nearly all dead drunk, one of the former lodgers heard screams upstairs. He found the stranger undressed and making an assault on the wife of his host. The lodger flung him downstairs, and to his horror found that he had killed him. He was terrified, and he and the woman left the house, calling to the others to fetch a doctor at once. Whatever the woman and he said to each other it was tragic, for she hurried to a pond and drowned herself, while he went to his sister's house and waited arrest. The husband was severely reprimanded for his "negligence." A woman counts for very little in the mining districts, she takes the German position of a kind of upper servant, in whose emotions, if she has any, none take any interest. In the manufacturing districts the working man's wife is generally a bread-winner herself, and she only needs a little enterprise to make her position much more favourable than it is at present.

Nearly all the police court cases turn on the question of the wife's housekeeping allowance. It is an endless source of dispute, and if it could be regulated, irrespective of caprice, most of the miseries of married poverty would cease. The poor are simple, and in this truth about them we see the truth about ourselves. We all want a regular income, and very few

of us gain from being dependent on the affection of our family. Divorce, then, is sordid with regard to sentiment and with regard to money, and in these ways is greatly in need of change.

V

THE GREEN HOUSES OF JAPAN

V

THE GREEN HOUSES OF JAPAN

THIS chapter deals with the subject of prostitution from the point of view of public health, so that the nervous reader had better skip it.

Edmond de Goncourt has written some charming chapters in his book about Outamaro, the Japanese artist, on the courtesans who live within the walls of Yoshiwara. He describes the quarter as containing fifty green houses within the walls and a hundred without the walls. They were established by the Emperor of Japan in the eighth century for the use of foreign princes, ambassadors, and wealthy merchants. The present walls were built in the seventeenth century. The girls, from all parts, are brought up like princesses, and taught writing, the arts, music, and the archaic language spoken by the court in the seventh and eighth centuries, which is now the language of the poets. The formalities of the suitors are three visits of ceremony, each with its ritual of good manners. A green house contains twenty first-class beauties and sixty second-class beauties. They sing, play,

and write verses. These are a few translations which give some idea of their feelings :—

> "It is only when both of us are looking at it that the moon is beautiful; when I am alone it makes me feel too sad."
>
> "This evening who will share the sweetness of life, this floating body in the passing world?"
>
> "Oh, that the moonlight might shine brightly in the waters of this life [the courtesan's], but the autumn moon on the other side of the clouds makes me long for it" [wifehood].
>
> "Although I am nothing here, the moon lights up my heart with a ray of consolation."
>
> "How often do I part from one whose shadow I shall never see again under the moon of dawn!"

These little moon-women are not the only members of the sisterhood in Tokio. There are the geishas who dance and sing, and there are the old and abandoned; but the horrible sordidness of the red blinds and the draggled torn lace curtains one sees in the streets Charles Booth has coloured red in his maps of London, is absent.

This question is not a mere matter of sentiment, it is one in urgent need of immediate attention. The pitiless contempt of married women for prostitution is bringing a terrible punishment, which is ruining the physique of nearly every civilized race. It is now certain

that the diseases called contagious can be cured with the greatest certainty if they are taken in hand in the earliest stages, but if they are neglected they bring in their train every scourge that the flesh is capable of enduring. It cannot be repeated too often that if women do not wish to contract diseases themselves in the intercourse of ordinary life, they must bring themselves to protect those who in the intercourse of passional life are ignorantly or malignantly spreading the diseases. There might be a trade union for women on the streets. In the cause of public health, which is, in this matter, the cause of future generations, family cannot separate itself from family, innocent from guilty, moral from immoral. We can no longer say: Let those who practise promiscuity suffer for their incontinence, let them encounter the dangers they choose to face, "let their sin find them out." We know now that from this particular scourge of contagious disease the pure suffer far more severely than the impure; and the races who have never known the disease are the first to die when, by accident, they finally come in contact with it.

So the clean, healthy youth from some remote country place is in greater danger than the sophisticated townsman. And mothers do not realize the dangers they and their young children run every day when, in their

ignorance of danger, they entrust their households to the care of women servants who may be carrying contagion without even knowing it.

The contempt that is shown towards prostitutes makes it impossible for them to insist upon proper sanitation in the quarters where they congregate. They are hunted from street to street, and, as they get poorer and poorer, their condition becomes more and more of a danger to the rest of the town.

I cannot make any suggestions as to the methods that should be used to make the danger less terribly imminent than it is at present, but I do suggest that the women who are uppermost should face the fact that they themselves are in danger because the lower prostitutes have no civil rights, no trade union, no means of redressing the wrongs they suffer from.

M. Brieux has written a play called *Les Avariés*, dealing with this important subject in all its aspects. One incident is that of a young girl on the streets who is infected by a man. She is furious and in despair, but before she goes into hospital she, in her turn, revenges herself on as many men as she can, for the wrong done to her by one.

Can we wonder that a woman who is treated as street walkers are treated should feel this wild anti-social rage against the society that

has first made use of her and then treated her as an outcast ?

It is becoming more and more difficult to say anything definite about the moral standards of women. Thirty years ago the chorus-girl drank champagne and " went to the bad," now she drinks milk and marries a peer. Girls with beauty are finding out that prudence pays exceedingly well. On the other hand, we have girls with brains deliberately resolving that they will not marry. They refuse to run the risk of living with a man whose love has become a mere habit. They boldly say that they do not care enough for love to perform its rites, unless they are animated with the ardour of love. Passion served up with cold sauce as in the Shaw-Barker school of sex revolts them. Enthusiastic love is the only excuse in their eyes for going through the rather ungraceful gestures of love.

Bloch has asked the question if we can ever do away with the menace to public health which promiscuity entails ? He seems to think from the evidence of history and psychiatry that men certainly, and women probably, are not naturally unitarian in their affections ; therefore the sooner we seriously wrestle with the realities and leave off hoping for the " something to change nature," the better. Above all, it is most important for women to realize at once that the most inno-

cent contact with the unmentioned diseases—the contact, say, of a cut finger or a chapped lip—is enough to endanger the health, unless it is attended to at once.

As for the aspect of the prostitution question entailed in taking money, the sale of virginity and so forth, it comes under the general consideration whether it is right for any woman to become the property of a man in exchange for money. A woman who loves does naturally become the property of the man she loves for the time being. The wiser she is, the less she will let him know it. The money bargain I cannot help regarding as a device invented by unattractive men whom no woman would voluntarily look at. Again, as to women whose love affairs are numerous, I do not think they would care to practise promiscuity unless they were intoxicated. On the other hand, I think most women are capable of several love affairs. I said before that their love ebbed and flowed with the sweep of a tide, while men's love glittered and dulled like the shaken silver of the waves; still, there are more tides than one in many women's experience. We cannot read the autobiographies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries without observing that.

That love becomes very stale in time is a regrettable fact. Many women distract their thoughts with work or amusements. But

the greatest amusement of all is flirtation. It is an amusement peculiarly fitted to the English. In the Latin countries flirtation is admittedly not only an amusement, but a vital part of women's lives. It cannot be denied that, after a time, a childless wife, or a wife who is not absorbed in her children, begins to feel like a withered rose tree, and a flirtation comes to her like springtime after winter. I do not think it is often her sensual nature, but her emotional nature, that makes a woman unfaithful to a husband of whom she has really been passionately fond. Unfortunately there is a charm about the first steps of a love affair, in the half-admissions and the uncertainties, which it is almost impossible to feel after a year of married life. The truth is that to feel a charm we must be in a state of emotional exultation which is above the average exultations of daily life. The great question for the race is what this feeling of charm means, and whether it is of value to the race, and to be encouraged? Or even then whether the destruction of our present fixed social arrangements is too great a sacrifice to make for the vital improvement of mankind? In the meantime, until this question of changing charm versus habitual love can be settled, and the value of emotion as a factor in race improvement be proved by careful inquiry into the experiences of the

parents of conspicuous children, I reiterate what I have said. Marrying women owe it to themselves and to their children to do all they can to make the conditions of prostitutes sanitary. Above all, they should remember the green houses of Japan, and recognize that if women are degraded it is generally because they have been treated with contempt, and not because they are essentially any more contemptible than the rest of us.

VI

BEAUTY AND MOTHERHOOD

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BEAUTY AND MOTHERHOOD

"AMERICANISM" is the word sometimes used by scientific men to imply the terror of motherhood that is coming upon women. The old days when Nelson said the two most beautiful things in the world were a ship in full sail and a woman with child, are passed. Pain and the loss of beauty mean something hauntingly horrible—something of a nightmare to the modern highly strung, nervous woman. In America the question is becoming one of national importance: as a matter of fact some women are beginning to refuse motherhood, both there and in other parts of the world. I do not see anything alarming in this. To me it means that women will specialize in the future. When the unnatural economic reasons for marriage have been removed, the natural desires of women will be able to assert themselves. For centuries they have lied and schemed and flattered men in order to wheedle a living out of them, and it will take some time for the weaker sex to learn that it may really tell the truth; to

learn, indeed, that it is necessary for the good of the race that it should tell the truth. When this is done it will be perceived that women are divided into two distinct classes—those that love men better than children, and those that love children better than men. This is natural enough. In ordinary life we can see some people prefer to associate with their inferiors, and some with their superiors. At present the comparatively free life led by men make them far better company, and therefore superior as a sex to women. They do not talk as well as clever women, but their views are wide, and as a rule they know something of the general facts of life. They are merrier, too, and I have often thought, "It is not so much that men must work and women must weep, but that men may laugh and women must look shocked."

But, as I was saying, some people prefer to look up, and others prefer to look down on their companions. Some people, to put it more pleasantly, like to care for and watch over others, while others want to be cared for. So it comes about that some women do not really love children. They may feel such a passion for a man that they long to be the mother of his child, but that is a state of unusual exultation, which in cold blood is repented later. On the other hand, the born mothers—the women who really long for chil-

dren, to whom it is a terrible deprivation to live without children—are undoubtedly the people who may best be entrusted with the future of the race.

I do not think that we shall ever get mankind to carry out the eugenic ideal of careful breeding, but I do think we might come to a time when the natural instinct of a woman for the fit father of her child will be a very important factor in the arrangements made for the existence and benefit of future generations.

We have such a lumber of useless old ethical codes to get rid of, and such innumerable practical suggestions for race betterment, that we hardly know where to begin. In the *Eugenic Review* for October, 1909, there is an excellent paper by Mr. Havelock Ellis, which explains a newly discovered and harmless operation which can be performed without making the slightest difference to an individual's happiness. This operation would prevent him or her from ever becoming a parent. It is hoped that it may some day be used in cases where the heredity is hopelessly bad. It would save a great deal of public expense in cases where the dangerous person would otherwise have to be kept under constant supervision. The great benefit of the discovery is that it has none of the unfortunate effects which often follow from the

practice of more Eastern methods of sterilizing the unfit. Contact with radium has also been found to lead to temporary sterility. But although stamping out the worst class of disease and imbecility in one generation would be a tremendous benefit, it is not the only remedy proposed. The encouragement and training of fit men and women—I mean the education in the laws of sexual health—would do a great deal to save the next generations from many ills that are brought upon it by the sheer ignorance of its parents. Here, again, we have to fight the silly conspiracy of silence which leaves schoolboys and schoolgirls to struggle through the early temptations of life without a word of warning from responsible people who have studied the subject of sex.

There is no doubt that the world at present is full of motherly women who have no chance of becoming mothers, and of unmotherly women who have children that they do not want, or more children than they want. It would be a great advance if these arrangements could be readjusted by some slight change of public opinion, guided by the obvious facts of heredity. For instance, it is a fact that some women are very fit to be mothers, and are unattractive as wives. For others, attractive to men as they often are, it is a sin to become mothers. A tuberculous woman is apt to have a much larger family than a nor-

mally healthy woman, and that tendency ought to be modified by surgical aid. Even these few suggestions acted upon would help to make the world less full of pain and sorrow.

But we are full of prejudices against these improvements. The old marriage laws, the old ideas of right and wrong remain; religious prejudice lasts far longer than religion; and the world moves on, and everyone hears of improvements that might be made quite easily. But nothing is done because of a public opinion which everyone supposes to exist, but is really a bugbear invented by the Press on the strength of a few letters from the sort of people who write letters of protest to the public libraries. A hundred letters impress an editor, because he forgets the millions of people who do not write letters, but pay all the same.

One of the most serious facts which is alleged with regard to the "Americanism" I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, is that the nervous sensitiveness from which the women of the United States suffer is caused by their education being too purely intellectual. Now this is probably true. I remember one of the cleverest men I have ever met, the late Professor York Powell, Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, who was an encyclopædia of information, and could assimilate the contents of a book in a phenomenally short time, told me that

he meant to paint up the words "Damn Intellect" over his mantelpiece at Christ Church. Intellect has been said to be the result of man's struggle with material facts, very useful as far as material facts go, but absurdly misleading when applied to the all-important side of our natures which comes under the consideration of the psychologist. The stuffing of one's head with a lot of undigested knowledge for purposes of examination is not only useless in after life, but really damaging to the vital apparatus. I was myself educated in the colleges of Miss Dorothea Beale and Miss Buss, and I know it took me quite six years to get out of the shell my education had hardened around me. I don't suppose I should ever have spread my own wings if the beak of my destiny had not been stronger than my overwhelming education, so that it succeeded in hammering through that shell at last.

In the next chapter I hope to show in more detail how women might be educated to deliberately cultivate their instincts, and use them in conjunction with the practical intellect to increase the power of intuitively understanding the consciousness of groups and crowds of people. Above all, how they may learn by definitely guiding the vegetative consciousness to increase the health and beauty of their children.

VII

THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY

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THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY

INTELLECT, then, is only a part of the life-consciousness. Henri Bergson and William James have both agreed that the other parts deserve our respect, and demand the attention of all practical people. They are Instinctive Consciousness and Torpid Consciousness. Bergson, so well known on the Continent, gives in *L'Evolution Créatrice* a brilliant outline of the relations of the intellectual, instinctive, and torpid states. Briefly, he pictures vital consciousness as the centre from which the three diverge in different radiations. The intellect which covers an enormous field and can grapple successfully with the superficial appearances we call facts, finds its present culmination in mankind. The instinct which dawns in the consciousness as vision, and deals only with one or two things, but knows them perfectly through and through to their deepest causes, finds its culmination in insects, especially in the elaborate societies of ants and bees. The torpid state which, without external motion, like deep sleep, is most

creatively powerful, most enduring, and most in touch with the first beginnings of organic life, finds its culmination in the vegetable kingdom. The psychologists' idea, then, for the practical future of our race is that it should turn its attention to the cultivation of these two modes of consciousness which have hitherto been lamentably neglected in all schemes of education.

Bergson says that there are many questions the intellect can ask but can never answer, which the instinct could answer, but, unprompted by the intellect, would never ask.

The practical turn psychology has taken lately has a very deep significance for women. For the adolescent girl and the woman with child are the very types of the power of mysterious torpid consciousness which is so little understood by the most learned men. The ancients have believed that a mother's impressions stamp themselves on the child and determine its type. I mean, for instance, that a woman surrounded by Burne-Jones's pictures would be likely to have children resembling that type. The whole matter is one of the deepest interest, and one guiding principle stands out from all our uncertainties on the subject, which is, that a woman with child should not use up her vitality in other directions, that she should for the time being live the life of a fruit tree, and nourish herself,

and sun herself without care and without intellectual distractions.

It is said that in deep sleep the creations of our imagination are conceived; and that the state of impending motherhood should be one of rest, and the quiet enjoyment of beauty and peace if it is to have a good result.

I am not saying all women should be mothers, nor am I saying that mothers should not have intellectual pleasures, but I do agree that they should not have intellectual tasks, and above all that they should be protected from worry, anxiety, and irritation. If the care of mothers became a national question, I believe the saving in the care of lunatics and unemployables and criminals would be incalculable.

The torpid consciousness is one which women who are to be mothers should respect. I believe it is a state cultivated to a high degree by the Eastern mystics, who have given us glimpses of the psychic powers to which it can give birth. It is intimately connected with a control over the emotional storms which affect most people and govern their conduct. The Eastern sage does not starve his emotional nature, but learns to direct it, while he is in a state of apparent torpor. So I believe the wise mother might, if she gave herself the opportunity, direct the future character of her child in the best sense of the word.

At present the torpid consciousness is

hardly understood at all, but the instinctive consciousness has been studied, although it is talked of with a contempt it is far from deserving. I admit that to some extent instinct is the enemy of civilization, but at the same time civilization is the enemy of instinct.

The old matriarchal village community seems to be the ideal state of an instinctive race of people. I do not say it is possible now, but it certainly seems a good way of conducting affairs on a dignified basis without the family unit.

Temperance with an occasional orgy is a prescription ordered for a patient by a modern doctor, and that exactly describes the life of the old matriarchal village. In the first place, it was situated near the equator, and everyone could do without clothes. The village children grew up together under the care of the elder men and women, with no curiosity about the unseen. They worked in the fields and perhaps hunted a little, but they all lived like brothers and sisters. They had a central grove of sacred trees in their village, with a dancing ground ; the huts were round the grove, and then the belt of cultivated land was called the "guardian serpent." Beyond that was the jungle, with paths leading to other villages. In the spring the Saturnalia was celebrated, and the young men left their homes and visited the other villages, scattered in the neighbourhood beyond the jungle-paths, to

celebrate the festival with song, wine, and dance. The orgy lasted a few weeks, during the blossom time, when there was no work required at home. It ended in a good deal of love-making, after which the young men returned to their homes sobered, and ready to work in their own villages for another year. Nine months later, when the weather made it well to remain indoors, the children were born, and were called the children of the sacred grove or the tree, and no one talked of fathers. The men of the tribe cheerfully undertook the education of the children, and maintained them on communal principles. It sounds almost as socially elaborate as a hive, and the whole business appears to have been carried out on purely instinctual lines. Perhaps I ought to add that all can read for themselves about these matriarchal customs in a book called *The Ruling Races of Prehistoric Times*, by J. F. Hewitt, and in Tiele's *Outline of the History of Ancient Religions*, also in Risley's *Tribes and Castes of Bengal*. The life was perhaps too austerely virtuous for the majority of mankind, but it had its advantages.

Instinct is an animal faculty cultivated by an outdoor life, which we to a great extent have swamped in our all-pervading intellects. It is a power of the consciousness which appears to act without effort, and to increase its power as we decrease our mental struggles. Very

often when after fussing over a lost object or forgotten name we cease to trouble ourselves, and employ our clamorous minds in some other direction, the consciousness of the name or place appears like the sky from which the clouds have cleared away. It is in the interplay between intellect and instinct that the practical value of the new school of psychology will be found. Our instincts need to be stimulated by the curiosity of our intellects. We have an extraordinary and inexhaustible power of inventing surprises for our intellect, both in our dreams and in inventive states of meditation. Some people call these things manifestations of the subconsciousness. I prefer to think of them as manifestations of the long-neglected powers of the instinct. We know that many insects who have never met their parents in their lives, yet carry out their destinies as if they had received the most careful personal instruction. The truth about instinct appears to be that it is a race-consciousness—a kind of wireless telegraphy which can be set in motion between sympathetic centres without passing through the mental machinery at all. It almost seems as if our brains, our nervous plexuses, and our glands * each had a manifest conscious-

* As to the study of the functions of the glands, many interesting discoveries have been mentioned in the medical journals during the last few years.

ness of their own, and it is not until we can set in motion an interplay of the three that we shall gain all we can, either from the intellect, the instinct, or the torpid creative consciousness.

When women come in for their share of control in affairs, there is no doubt we shall make further use of these more feminine aspects of vital consciousness.

VIII

THE IMAGINATIVE WOMAN

VIII

THE IMAGINATIVE WOMAN

Now women can look at love from a great many points of view. If it were not so, Byron would hardly have been justified when he said :

> "Love is from men's lives a thing apart,
> 'Tis woman's whole existence."

Women can look upon love as a physical act which enables them to become mothers. They can look upon it as a sanctification or a means of enjoyment. They can look upon it as a subject of scientific curiosity, in which mood they logically compare facts and come to sage conclusions. They can consider their own temperaments and peculiarities, and take into account their personal bias and characters, philosophically. Or they can use their imaginations to alter all the conditions which life has imposed upon them, to transcend all the limitations of incarnation, and, having passed beyond philosophy, science, emotion, and experience, bathe in the love between the fixed stars and comets rushing from the spaces beyond. They can

take dim legends and embroider them with rich details. In a word, the imaginative woman from her childhood has known dreams of such rare beauty that nothing life shows her is good enough. She passes from disappointment to disappointment. She never finds in one place or one person the wonder that description had made her see in her mind's eye.

Thousands of less imaginative women long for the impossible. They are fed on romantic stories and live in the more or less commonplace imagination of the novelists or playwrights they patronize. Thousands of tired men have this same love of vicarious sensation—anything that lifts them out of the drab of their surroundings into a merry or sentimental atmosphere is a relief.

Life seems hopeless to the middle-aged. Most of them once thought they could put it right in a week if they had a free hand. They try, they fail, they marry and spend the evening of their lives trying to destroy the illusions of their children as quickly as possible, so that they also may "settle down" to hard facts. To excuse himself a thinker will say, "I know the dangers of cultivating the imagination; I know that unless it is nipped in the bud this wild flower of the mind will twine its tendrils round me, cover me with its shadows, intoxicate me with its fragrance, and destroy reason and physical health." In answer, I

admit there are dangers, but on the other hand if the possibly evil weed is cultivated by wise gardeners, it may show itself at last as the most splendid flower of the soul. The cultivator of flowers that sterilizes the bud and diverts the life-force into creations of elaborate beauty has found the physical side of the religious mystery called the Coronation of the Virgin. The imaginative power that has reached this point transmutes human nature, whether philosophic, scientific, sensual, or physical, and it is then that the soul may be said to have attained the regenerate state which makes for the unnatural beauty we call perfection of culture.

The imaginative woman may reach the degree of joyous saintly beauty, or she may stop short at the next stage in which she is enough of a philosopher to recognize the great variety of temperaments to be met with among her fellow-creatures, and to greet them all alike with sympathy and interest. She may not reach the philosophic or really sympathetic stage, she may remain in a third stage, where her mind can coldly classify her fellow-creatures with critical discretion, and laugh at them all cynically. Or she may not be able to perceive clearly, but may be carried away perpetually by her own feelings and sensations, in the fourth degree of unawakened ignorance. Lastly, she may abandon the four regions of beautiful image making, sympathy,

perception, and sensation, and deliberately devote herself with common-sense prudence to the patient task of getting her daily bread and reproducing her species until she dies of it. On the other hand, she may go mad, she may become silly, she may drown her disgust with life in alcohol or drugs, or she may irritate her feeble dream-power with novelettes. These states of degenerate imaginations are the worst curses of the woman's sphere as it is at present understood. Good hard work, rewarded by a decent income, varied by motherhood and love, is the best cure for these vapourings.

The men who have a good deal of womanhood in their natures suffer and enjoy through their imaginations in the same way, and it is interesting to observe that a really virile man has no trace of imaginative power in his composition. He cares for nothing but tangible reality. When men of imagination talk to him he has not the smallest conception of what they mean. I think it was Goethe who said that he felt the universe in his arms when he embraced a woman. What I am obliged to call a virile man feels nothing of the kind, he is merely amusing himself like Don Juan, or any cat or dog. However, Don Juan is a rarity.

It is very difficult to classify temperaments without alluding to Weiningen's *Sex and*

Character. That book has been followed by other classics on the subject by Forel and Bloch, but I only want to remind my readers that in Weiningen's book they will find, set out at length, the ingenious theory that virile men and feminine women are the rarest creatures on earth, and that the great majority of us are made up of various proportions of the two sexes. He further suggests that happy unions are those in which the proportions of sex in the two lovers together make up one virile man and one feminine woman. For instance, a man who was one-eighth feminine should marry a woman who was one-eighth masculine.

I am told that Mr. Austen Chamberlain repeatedly made the very careless statement that " men are men, and women are women," in a speech delivered in 1909. He evidently has not acquainted himself with the elementary science of sex. Is it not time that the books alluded to above should be made generally accessible ? Then our younger statesmen, at least, might come to the platform with some less absurd refrain than that obsolete inaccuracy. Let me assure Mr. Chamberlain that German science and research have proved that the contrary statement would be rather more exact.

IX

EXPERIMENTS

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EXPERIMENTS

We are all speculating about the changes to be brought about in this century from which we women hope so much, and a great many people are making practical experiments. Myself, I am of that tranquil nature which willingly follows the advice of Punch when he says: "Never practise what you preach, to do so is to hold up your opinions to obvious ridicule."

I must confess to an altogether selfish concern for my own comfort. I dislike the home because it means that one has to live with people who are privileged to behave without politeness in each other's company. Most of us share the feeling, I think, that we like to be the worst-behaved person present. This can only be achieved satisfactorily to all when one lives by oneself. My own experiments have mostly been in the attempt to modify the solitary life with an exactly pleasant proportion of social life. I was brought up in a large family until I was twenty-three, and I lived the orthodox married life for four years, so

that I have given home and the family as much trial as seemed necessary.

As a hermit with mitigating friends and enemies, and the various societies I have helped to run, my life has been unusually full of varied interests. I have no regrets, because my failures have been some of my most valuable experiences, and my moments of bitterness have been the cause of my greatest contentment.

At the same time, one is horribly afraid that one might induce courage in some other person whose heart is too tender to get through trouble. One is rather apt to dread the grey life of a patient woman without any kind of artistic talent, who makes a muddle of her affairs because she religiously practises instead of preaching.

Some people say that example is better than precept ; but in the case of social reform and the need of a real change in public opinion, my experience shows me that precept is no good at all, if one is suspected of inventing it to serve one's own purposes of self-indulgence. I own I have indulged myself by leading a solitary life as described above, therefore I do not propose to try to destroy the home and family life. Those who are suffering from the home want to do away with it. With philosophic calm I can suggest improvements and ways of escape that would make it bearable,

but would not destroy it. As a matter of fact the home is in a very poor way just at present. Public-houses, clubs, restaurants, the servant difficulty are all devastating it. Still, it does not do to say we are glad, so I register the fact with as long a face as I can pull, and trust my readers will recognize the sad truth in the same serious spirit.

But, to return to experiments, let us go back a little in time, and we find that all gay societies, such as that under Louis XIV and XV of France, The Empire and the Second Empire, practised every kind of experiment. Yet one looks upon Rousseau, Mary Wolstonecraft, Shelley, and Godwin as the real pioneers of experiment, because they made a kind of religion of their protests against convention. Of late years it has become the fashion to solemnly register a protest every time one omits to register one's marriage.

It is partly my stupid objection to public indecency that makes me object to the advertisement of marriage, legal or illegal. One has to clean one's teeth, some people have to marry, but for the life of me I cannot see the use of talking about either of these necessities. Surely the whole object of modern civilization is to conceal the fact that we are animals. It is true that we have begun to made a public art of eating, but although we permit ourselves to munch in public, we disguise the nature of

our food, and we have sternly suppressed the more ancient freedoms of the dinner-table. We no longer think it polite to go about when we suffer from catarrh, and it is seldom that we encounter unpleasant expectorations, except in the immediate haunts of admittedly hooligan circles.

They say that nowadays it is possible to talk of any subject as long as one does so with sufficient delicacy and avoids the words of the gutter and the club smoking-room. Still, I admit that it is difficult to explain that just as we feel that every other necessary function of nature should be performed without attracting attention to it, so I feel that I would rather not be informed every time the bold experimenters in marriage see fit to take a partner.

When outspokenness is for the public good, when a "hushed-up disease" becomes disastrous simply because it is "hushed up," then there is some meaning in making a gospel and parade of the truth. But I really think it is time we accepted the convention that men and women seek each other's society in order to exchange ideas.

Strangely enough it is often the case. A woman has only to talk and listen well, and she will find that the less she desires love the more friendliness she will receive from men. Saint Teresa of Spain was an excellent example of this. I suppose she had more warmly

affectionate friendships with men, without a shadow of scandal, than any other woman. A perfectly frank woman will generally keep men as her friends, they will not dare to be her lovers unless she deliberately ceases to be frank.

Unfortunately experimenters have to be original in order to be successful. The people for whom I am sorry are those who are led into making experiments which are unnatural to them by the hypnotic power of seductive example.

Save us from our imitators is the cry of all great poets; and the only valuable advice one can give is, if you must experiment be careful that you lead the way and are not seduced by the example of anyone else. If by nature you must follow, it is a sign that you are a gregarious animal, and had better remain with the main body of the herd. The real experimenters are quite ready for solitude, and when they have found fair country and good pasture the rest of the herd will come over in a body with one accord. It is no use perishing with cold on the way to the Pole, unless you have the capacity to find it. Much better stop at home by the fireside.

X

THE SAVAGE, THE BARBARIAN THE CIVILIZED

X

THE SAVAGE, THE BARBARIAN, THE CIVILIZED

THE stately Spaniard, graceful as a tree swaying in its dance with the wind, savage and noble.

The Nihilist Russian, watching in her lair, instinctive and ready to kill. Her hatred of government marking her as the free barbarian.

The Parisian, knowing the correct convention of a funeral or an adultery, civilized and logical to her glove-tips.

Of the three women the two first are simple, but civilization is complex, and it may mean to be cultivated with regard to intellect like the Jesuits, art like the Greeks, morals like the Irish, or religion like the Arab.

In which way will the women of the future develop? Will she strive like the frequenters of the *salon* of Madame de Rambouillet to excel in intellect, or like Saint Teresa of Spain as a religious mystic? We have seen both these types, and I have no doubt that we shall see many shining examples of morality, but at the moment I cannot think of any conspicuous woman of whom no one has whispered scandal. For in these days if

people do not trip in one direction, it is said it is because they prefer to trip in another; and soon it will be taken as a sign of evil life that one should live in a desert on bread and water. I mention in passing that our late Queen is usually admitted to have been conspicuously moral. In the arts we have seen, and hope to see again, great women novelists and actresses. In history we have an array of splendid uncivilized women immortalized from all time—Medea, Electra, the Roman empresses, Queen Maive of Connaught, the Russian heroines. Whether they excelled most as noble savages or as gloriously barbaric haters of ordered life, I cannot stay to consider.

For I want the women who read this book not to dwell upon the past, but to look forward to the great century that is waiting for their alchemy, to transmute its life by giving it a more intent purpose. Are we going to be like the very badly dressed lady of title, whom we heard the other day imploring us to behave ourselves like other people, just as we dressed like other people, in order not to be conspicuous! Or are we really going to make something out of this brilliant opportunity given us by the "refusal of the vote," and the quickly spreading passion of enthusiasm which is moving the women of all nations to make a fight against the patriarchal faith of the goat-worshippers.

The Savage and the Civilized

Mr. Gorst says that the object of life is making (moral) love. I think the object of our life is to make experiments, as gardeners make experiments in floriculture. I quarrel with absorption in the family because family jealousy is a bar to that kind of social intercourse which is the only education worth having, and the only experience which can lead to any result worth having. They say in France, "Love is a play in which the acts last five minutes, and the *entr'actes* for any time you like." If it filled the whole of life it would only mean that life would be as short as that of the ephemeral winged creatures of the insect world. Family love cannot absorb us if we wish to survive. We are complicated, and our possibilities of social and political intercourse are a subject of endless interest and inquiry. Let us then start again on our voyages of discovery, this time with a little more purpose in our method and delight in our hearts.

Women want the vote, it is true, but what they want more, and what they are getting, is strength to hammer through the prisons which have kept them for many centuries packed away conveniently for use on occasion. They are all coming out into the daylight for the first time within our memory, and now the real movement of life begins.

We want to change public opinion about

divorce, contagious diseases, and forethought with regard to breeding. We want married women to recognize the various proportions of sexuality in each sex, to make allowance for the passionate, and to admit that we are greatly indebted for our culture to individuals who do not desire to be parents.

In conclusion, all I can say is, "Talk! talk! talk!" We are more moved by one conversation than by many eloquent discourses. After all, what is so permanently delightful as communion of ideas? So once again I say, "Go on talking until the savage, the barbarian, and the civilized women have found out all they can learn from each other. Plenty of men will be glad to help them in their discoveries."

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